

But Crispus—if the usually accepted theory be right —had a bitter and implacable enemy in the Empress Fausta, who regarded him as standing in the path of her own children, and menacing their interests by his proved merit and abilities. The eldest of her sons, who bore his father's name, was not yet in his teens; the second, Constantius, had been born in 319; the third, Constans, was a year younger. Her three daughters were infants or not yet born. These three young princes, like Caius and Lucius,—to pursue the Augustan parallel,—threatened rivalry to Crispus as they grew up, the more so, perhaps, because Constantine had always possessed the domestic virtues which were rare in a Roman Emperor. In his young days one of the court Panegyrists had eulogised him as a latter-day miracle—a prince who had never sowed any wild oats, who had actually had a taste for matrimony while still young, and, following the example of his father, Constantius, had displayed true piety by consenting to become a father.* Another Panegyrist praised him for "yielding himself to the laws of matrimony as soon as he ceased to be a boy," and Eusebius, more than once, emphasises his virtues as a husband and parent. Constantine, we suspect, was a man easily swayed by a strong-minded woman, ambitious to oust a step-son from his father's favour.

There was yet another great lady of the reigning house whose influence upon the Emperor has to be taken into account. This was his mother, Helena,

* *Novum jam turn miraeulum jttvenis uxorius*
(*Pan. Vet.*, vi., c. 2 et 4).